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[Redacted]

Venezuela-Guyana: The Venezuelan armed forces are planning a military buildup near the disputed border with Guyana.

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[Redacted]

An antiguerrilla theater of operations will be set up and specially trained counterinsurgency battalions will be stationed near the frontier. The plans are simpler than earlier ones that had foundered, and so probably stand a greater chance of being accepted by President Caldera.

President Caldera has expressed his desire to use diplomatic channels, including a dialogue with the Guyana Government, to achieve Venezuelan objectives. The four-month-old government, however, is increasingly beset with problems. A severe fiscal crisis, a hostile congress, and dissatisfaction within the military over the government's antiguerrilla program have eroded Caldera's political position. He may come to feel that he must authorize force in order to divert domestic critics and to maintain himself in office.

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(Map)

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El Salvador - Honduras: The negative attitude of the Salvadoran Government remains the main obstacle to any easing of the current crisis.

President Sanchez has rejected the Central American mediators' proposal for removal of troops from the border and creation of a buffer zone. He also decided not to proceed with a plan which would have included a pledge to abstain from provocation or aggressive activities along the border. Sanchez reportedly fears that the military might violate any assurance that he might give, thereby undermining his position.

The belligerent tone of the Salvadoran press and radio has helped to create a strong anti-Honduran mood. The general public, the Christian Democratic opposition, and significant elements of the business and professional community favor an aggressive policy. There are also signs of growing military pressure for an invasion of Honduras.

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In contrast, Honduras has thus far taken a moderate, conciliatory tone since the break in relations two weeks ago. There is concern over the possibility of a Salvadoran invasion, but the main interest is to begin serious negotiations to normalize relations and prevent war. The government has kept most of its troops away from the border and has already accepted the creation of a buffer zone.

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